



I'm not a flower guy, per se. Though, I do my best when purchasing ample to mark occasions and a bounty when I'm wrong. At the florist (she knows me by name), I ask to see what's available in the walk-in. Stems of this and that with Latin names that sound like foreign countries are bundled together, captive in white buckets on cold metal shelves and by my feet on the floor. After seeing a palette of nature's colors rising from a stylish vase at home, however, I wonder why I don't invite nature in more often.

As fate would have it, there rose another occasion for flowers. But I needed to do one better. Now meander and talk and stroll I can do for hours. So we drove past timeless barns and hearty farmland, up and down upstate hills toward the mountains and finally to the South Carolina Botanical Garden for 295 acres of colorful symphony—and a picnic!

We were surprised to find, only a few blocks from Clemson, a picnic paradise seemingly miles from modern day life. After receiving a map of

the garden from the Fran Hanson Discovery Center--a former Southern Living Showcase Home built for the gardens and now a visitor's hub and gift shop with rotating featured artists--we first explored the Campbell Geology Museum adjacent to the house. Displaying one of the Southeast's largest collections of gems and minerals, the museum is home to a florescent mineral room and a smilodon, a saber tooth cat.

You'll find manicured gardens along short, crossing paths and around

every bend, pond or waterfall. Well marked and defined, the Botanical Garden is an outdoor classroom. The camellia collection blooms in the winter and contains hundreds of varieties; azaleas, daffodils and the vast display of woodland wildflowers usher in the spring; varieties of annuals and perennials provide warm colors in the lazy summer; and deciduous tree leaves and chrysanthemums blaze their way through the autumn.

Hunger behind us, we napped in the warm sun. Around us, chipmunks scurried about trees with flickering leaves. The wildflower meadow swayed. The hostas hung in the shade. And with no cold walk-in around, everyone's roots were anchored in the ground.

Find out more...

SC Botanical Garden
864-656-3405 ▪ www.clemson.edu/scbg

